HEZEKIAHS
Return of
PRAISE
For His
RECOVERY.

By *A. L.*

PSAL. L. 14, 15.

Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the most high.
And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me.

LONDON,
Printed by *E. Cotes*, for *Samuel Tomson* at the *Bishops-Head* in *Duck-lane*. 1668.

To the Pious Reader.

THE Occasion of Preaching this Sermon, was suitable to the Text, a good Man's Recovery: of Printing it, the desire of Copies; and the Press was for this judg'd the readiest way: and thus though intended but for few, may be for the use of many. The Author is one neither seeks applause, nor fears censure; if it may do thy soul any benefit, he has his end. To which purpose this Synopsis was added, that thou mightest have the Method and Heads of the Discourse before thee in one view. The Doxology in the close being an Extract great part of it out of the Psalter (a book, which if thou deserv'st the name I called thee by, thou art well acquainted with) needed no references. If by the perusal thou find'st thy self any whit benefited, give God the praise, and let the Author have thy prayers. Farewel.

The

Mary Webster her Book

The SYNOPSIS.

The *Text* divided into IV. *Parts*.

I. *The* Affliction: *and that either*
1. *Corporal. A ſickneſs: deſcrib'd by*
It's Quality, Bitterneſs: *and that as it is*
1. *Undergone by* Hezekias.
Obſ. God's deareſt ones are not exempt from bitter afflictions;
2. *Reſented by him.*
Obſ. Natural apprehenſions allow'd even in Exerciſes of grace.
It's Quantity, Great bitterneſs.
Obſ. Great Saints exerciſed with great Tryals.
The change, For Peace, i. e. *Health.*
Obſ. The truly pious in change of condition change not; but ſerve God for God's ſake.
The ſurprize, Behold.
Obſ. A Chriſtian muſt ſtand upon his guard.
2. *Spiritual, Trouble of Conſcience.*
Obſ. A troubled conſcience is not alwayes an evil conſcience.

II. *The* Deliverance: *Conſidered in*
The Author, *God:* Thou haſt deliver'd.
Obſ. God is the ſole author of all our deliverances.
The Motive, In love, *and that* to my ſoul.
Obſ. Divine mercy is gratuitous.
Obſ. Soul-love is the beſt of loves.
The Danger, From the pit of corruption.
Obſ. All our life-time we walk on the pit-brink.

III. *The* Improvement *and* Aſſurance: *Pardon of ſins.*
Thou haſt deliver'd, thou haſt caſt my ſins, &c.
Obſ. God uſes to accumulate mercies.
In love to my ſoul; for thou haſt caſt, &c.
Obſ. Pardon of ſins the complement and perfection of mercy.
From the pit; for thou haſt caſt, &c.
Obſ. Where ſin is forgiven, no fear of hell or the grave.
All my ſins behind thy back.
Obſ. God's pardons are univerſal and abſolute.

IV. *The* Acknowledgment. *Where mark by the way.*
(*The Connexion*: For the grave, *&c.*
Obſ. The only Return God expects for mercy is *Praiſe.*
The Synonymy of Praiſe and Hope.
Obſ. To truſt in God is to praiſe him.)
As 'tis ſet Negatively, The grave cannot, *&c.*
Obſ. Death is a ſilent and hopeleſs ſtate.
Poſitively, The living ſhall.
Obſ. Our life to be ſpent in the giver's praiſe.
Laſtly, exemplified, As I do this day.
Obſ. Signal mercies require ſolemn Thankſgiving.

HEZE-

HEZEKIAH's Return of PRAISE for his RECOVERY.

ISA. xxxviii. 17, 18, and part of the 19, ver.

17. *Behold, for peace I had great bitterneſs; but thou haſt in love to my ſoul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou haſt caſt all my ſins behind thy back.*

18. *For the grave cannot praiſe thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.*

19. *The living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee, as I do this day.* ——

THESE Words are part, and indeed the principal part of *Hezekiah's* Song of *Thanksgiving*, after he was recover'd of a dangerous ſickneſs; as you finde in the ninth Verſe, when all his thoughts were, as himſelf tells us from the 10th. to the 15th. Verſe, that he ſhould not live, that he ſhould never eſcape this bout, never come abroad more. *I ſaid*, that is, by an

* אמר, uti Græcè φράζομαι, dicere & cogitare; prout è contra, חזה & שוח meditari primùm, dein loqui.

Hebraism, * I thought, *in the cutting off of my dayes*, (or as some Versions render it, *in the midst of my dayes*) *I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living.* I shall never go more to Church, never have any further opportunities to wait upon God in his Sanctuary. *I shall behold man no more with the Inhabitants of the World*; never go abroad again to converse with men any more, *&c.* So that in effect he gave himself up for lost, as to this world; and perhaps the Physicians did so too. Nay, and which was more, when the Doctors belike had given him over; the Prophet brings him the unwelcom message, that he must prepare himself, *For dye he should, and not live*, v. 1. Yet after all, when he was *in extremis*, upon his prayer, God was intreated to renew his lease, and to lengthen his life. And so as in the *former* part of his Song he mournfully commemorates his Sickness: So in the *latter* part from the 15th. verse, to the end, he chearfully returns thanks for his Recovery.

The words, we have made choice of, belong to this *latter* part; and there are four things in them observable.

1. A sad heavy affliction. *Behold for peace I had great bitterness.*

2. A merciful deliverance out of this affliction,

But

But thou haſt in love to my ſoul delivered it from the pit of corruption.

3. A bleſſed improvement of this mercy, *For thou haſt caſt all my ſins behinde thy back.*

4. A thankful acknowledgement of this improved mercy, *in the reſt of the words.*

The *Affliction* aggravated, I.

1. By a deſcription of it in its own nature, both in the quality of it, 'twas *bitterneſs*; and in the quantity of it, 'twas *great bitterneſs*.

2. By oppoſition of the contrary bleſſing which it remov'd, 'twas *for peace*; a word, that comprehends in the notion of it all our worldly enjoyments, all temporal bleſſings whatſoever; and more particularly in Holy Writ is taken for *health*, a bleſſing, without which all other bleſſings have no relliſh in them, give no true ſatisfaction to the enjoyer, *For peace I had great bitterneſs*, i. e. for the health which he had formerly enjoy'd, he had had a very bitter ſickneſs. II.

And then laſtly the bitterneſs of this change is heightned by the ſurprize of it. *Behold*, as a ſtrange thing! *Behold*, how all on a ſudden, *upon my peace came great bitterneſs*, as the Margin reads it.

Bitterneſs, and *great bitterneſs*, and that in exchange *for peace*, for a ſtate of health and proſperity; and all this with a ſudden ſtrange ſurprize.

Behold, for peace I had great bitterneſs. This was his *Affliction*.

And this much further aggravated ſtill, if we unde ſtand it as we muſt, in a ſpiritual ſenſe too; that his ſickneſs calling his ſins to remembrance, and cauſing ſome diſtruſts of God's love, inſtead of that *peace* of conſcience, and quiet tranquillity of minde he had had heretofore, his ſpirit was now troubled, and greatly imbittered. And * *a wounded grieved ſpirit who can bear?* Prov. 18. 4.

II. On the other hand, the mercy of the *Deliverance* wants not its heightning circumſtances too: as,

1. From the efficient cauſe, 'twas God deliver'd him, *But thou haſt deliver'd.*

2. From the motive or impulſive cauſe, 'twas out of *Love*; not out of deſign, as men uſually do courteſie: but out of a free kindeneſs, and that a love of the beſt ſort; 'twas *in love to his ſoul.*

And 3. From the danger he was deliver'd out of, and that no ordinary one; it was a *pit*, and no ordinary pit neither, 'twas *the pit of corruption*, even the Grave, the very ſtate of death.

But thou haſt in love to my ſoul deliver'd it from the pit of corruption.

So then, however he came by his ſickneſs, he is ſure 'twas *God* recover'd him out of it; and he did it out of *Love*, out of an eſpecial love he bore to the

the *ſoul* of him, which was ſufficiently manifeſted by this, that his life was precious in Gods ſight, God delivering it *from the pit of corruption.*

III. Nor is this all. You heard 'twas a ſpiritual mercy, for 'twas in love to his ſoul; and therefore the health of body was to be attended with the welfare of his ſoul: and ſo for a full *Aſſurance* of Divine love to his ſoul, and for a further *Improvement* of this temporal bodily mercy, 'tis added; *for thou haſt caſt all my ſins behinde thy back*, that, as God had imbrac'd his ſoul in the arms of his love; (ſo the Interlinear Verſion, *Amplexus es amore animam meam*) and as it were put her into his boſom; ſo he had caſt all his ſins behinde his back, never to come more into remembrance.

This is the Crown of Mercies, when temporals are thus accumulated with ſpirituals; this a recovery indeed of the whole man, when health is improv'd into ſalvation, and ſtrength of body accompanied with pardon of ſins. This is right *ſaving Health*, and deſerves the returns of a grateful *Acknowledgment*, which now follows in the laſt place.

IV. And that is ſet forth, firſt, by ſhewing the impoſſibility for the dead to perform this duty, which is very elegantly expreſs'd by three *Synonymies*.

For the grave cannot praiſe thee.
Death cannot celebrate thee.

They,

They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

which all come to one meaning.

And then on the contrary, ſhewing not the poſſibility only, but the probability that *the living* will, i. e. ſuch as divine mercy continues in life, and eſpecially ſuch as are by that mercy preſerv'd from imminent danger of death.—

—*The living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee.*

And this probability exemplified in himſelf, made good by his own practice;—

——*As I do this day.*

Thus having open'd the ſeveral ſcenes of our intended meditation, I ſhall now proceed to draw from them ſome uſeful *Obſervations*, interweaving their applications all along, with that brevity and clearneſs, as ſuch copious heads of matter may in ſuch ſtraights of time admit; and that rather in a curſory Explanation, then in an elaborate diſcourſe.

Firſt, then for the *Affliction*, 'tis not only bitter, but in the abſtract *bitterneſs* it ſelf. The ſenſe of Taſte is the moſt neceſſary of all our ſenſes, it being that by which all *Animals* live, and take in their food and nouriſhment; and therefore has in it a power to judge, what is grateful and convenient to the nature of each kinde, what not. Now there

is

is no guſt the palate ſo much diſ-reliſhes as the *bitter*; nothing, that nature ſhews a greater abhorrence to, or that is leſs welcome to her: whereupon the *Pſalmiſt* in the perſon of *Chriſt* looks upon it as one of his enemies greateſt unkindeneſſes, that they gave him * *Gall and Vinegar to drink*; and *Chriſt* himſelf upon the Croſs, (I ſuppoſe, out of his meer natural averſation, as he was man) when he had taſted of it, οὐκ ἤθελε πιεῖν, * *He would not drink it.* Upon this ſcore 'tis, that by an uſual *Metaphor* every thing that is highly diſpleaſing to any of our affections and ſenſes, either to the rational or ſenſitive appetite, is termed *bitter*: every thing, I ſay that is any way afflictive to fleſh and blood, any thing that ails us in Minde, or Body, or Eſtate, or good name; whether grief, or pain, or poverty, or reproach, and the like; we may as *Hezekiah* here calls his ſickneſs, give it the name of *bitterneſs*: nay, even though thoſe afflictions come from the hand of God himſelf our gracious Father, by whoſe providential diſpenſations every particular event, be it good or bad, is ſo carefully managed, that not a Sparrow falls to the ground without his order. And yet this bitterneſs too, though never ſo unpleaſant, may be made profitable, if we make a right uſe of it; as we may learn two things from it here,

* *Pſ.* 69. 21.

* S. *Matth.* 27. 34.

1. not to be *impatient.*

2. not

2. not to be *insensible*,
when we are under Gods hand in any affliction.

Hezekiah's being in bitterness teacheth us one, and his complaining of it the other.

Who? Good King *Hezekiah* in bitterness? sick, and that unto death? this is bitterness indeed, that such a *Prince*, who was a National blessing; that *V. 3.* such a *Saint*, who had *walkt before the Lord in truth, and in the sincerity of his heart, done that which was good in his sight*, should be cut off in the midst of his dayes at XXXIX. (for that was his age at this time; the fifteen years which were now added, * See 2 Chron. 29. 1. making up his * whole life LIV.) and should by a bitter and untimely death be sent away to the gates of the Grave, after the languishment of a pining distemper. Hence we observe, that *Gods* Obs. *dearest ones are not exempted from bitter afflictions.* And what are we then, that we should repine, and murmur, and think our selves hardly dealt with? Are we better then all those *Saints*, who have gone before us, who have pledg'd their Master in hearty draughts of his *Passion-Cup*, and have march'd after him in the *dolorous way* towards heaven? This should teach us not only with *patience*, but even with chearfulness to take up our crosses, and to deny our selves in our healths, in our fortunes, in all our enjoyments. And to recommend this vertue the more to us, let us take along with us some

ſome conſiderations, why it pleaſes God to imbitter many times, as he does, the condition of his Children and Servants in this world. Now God does it upon ſuch reaſons as theſe; for the chaſtiſement of ſin, from which the very beſt are not free; for tryal and exerciſe of their faith and other Graces, which elſe would lie idle upon their hands: for what uſe of patience in time of health and proſperity? and conſequently for their amendment and improvement. The Furnace is heated over and over, that, having all their droſs burnt up, their graces may be burniſhed and throughly refined, as Silver purified ſeven times in the fire. And tell me now, O impatient ſoul, whoever thou art, what reaſon haſt thou to take Gods dealings unkindely? Tell me, canſt thou ſay with any ſhew of reaſon, that he deals otherwiſe then juſtly and kindely by thee in all this; who orders all ſo to thy good, that his greateſt ſeverities are, if thou wilt but rightly underſtand them, the moſt advantageous mercies? Further, he does it to wean us from the world, and to take off that hank, which the fleſh has upon us; to mortifie carnal luſts, and worldly deſires; and give us a heavenly reliſh. Thus when the Breaſt is imbittered, the Childe will of himſelf forſake it. And laſtly, to prepare us for our great change: Theſe conflicts and encounters we have with all ſorts of

1.

2.

3

4.

5.

affliction, during our whole life, are but Eſſayes and *Specimens* of that conqueſt, which we muſt through Chriſt make at laſt of death; that, as he has overcome the world, and ſwallowed up Death in victory, we may be made partakers of his triumphs; and having fill'd up his ſufferings, may in his name ſet up our banners and our trophies; the banners of our confidence, and the trophies of our victory. And now, if we have any ingenuity to acknowledge our ſins, any zeal to imploy our graces, any holy ambition to better and improve our ſelves, any deſires towards heaven, or ſavour of ſpiritual things; in a word, any thought or deſign of living holy, and dying happy: what reaſon have we with more then *patience*, even with kindeneſs and friendſhip, to entertain afflictions, which are to help us in all this.

Yet let afflictions be as good as they will in the conſequents and effects, they are afflictions ſtill, and may be ſo reſented. *Hezekiah* no queſtion made very good uſe of his ſickneſs, and found as great benefit by it; and yet ſtill after his recovery he complains of it, and calls it *bitterneſs*. We muſt be *patient*, and yet we may be *ſenſible* of our afflictions too. *We are allow'd the apprehenſions of nature, even in the exerciſes of Grace.* A good man may be patient, and yet feel his pains, and complain of them

Obſ.

them too: or else indeed 'tis not a genuine patience. I do not think him truly valiant, whom armour or amulet has made invulnerable; but him, that feels the smart of his wounds, and yet fights on. Thus our *Saviour*, the Captain of our Salvation, in his Agony, prayes to have the Cup pass from him, sayes bemoaningly of himself, that his *Soul* was *sad unto death*; that, as he hung on the Cross poor man at the stretch of every joynt, flouted by his Adversaries, deserted by his followers, forsaken by his Father, he cries out, *My God, my God,* &c. and being roasted with the scorching flames of Divine Wrath, he calls for drink to allay the raging heat of his *thirst*. For although the Divinity could have deaded all the pains, which the humane nature underwent, and have raptur'd it into a glorious impassibility: yet that was not to be, since the main merit of his passive obedience lay in this, that he had a quick sense of the wrath of God due to sin into the very heart of him; and that, notwithstanding the natural sentiments of his humanity, which put him upon the desire of being excused, he yet with perfect submission went through all the sad stages of his bitter passion. Yet now the world is grown to that pass, as if Religion were turn'd *Stoicism*, and stupidity were Christian Valour; that people generally take it for a kinde of bravery, to be insensible of God's

Judgements, and to walk unconcern'd in the midſt of publick or perſonal calamities: but ſure thoſe of this temper are no other, then ſuch as the Apoſtle tells us of, *Rom.* 1. 31. *Void of natural affection.*

Thus then *Hezekiah's* being in bitterneſs teacheth us to be *patient*, and his complaining of it allows us to be *ſenſible*. And no marvel, that he complains, for 'twas not only bitterneſs, but *great bitterneſs*; both extenſively over all parts, all over bitterneſs; and intenſively, all kindes, all degrees of bitterneſs, and ſo as the Original doubles the word, מר לו מר one way in *Hebrew* to expreſs the *ſuperlative*: ſo S. *Hierom* renders it, *Amaritudo mea amariſſima*, my moſt bitter bitterneſs, ſuperlatively bitter. Now, why God does thus at any time with any of us, to make our conditions bitter and bitter again, to put in great bitterneſs, more bitter ingredients ſtill; beſides thoſe reaſons we gave before, (this inlarging the doſe being deſigned to perfect the cure) we have two or three more to offer: as firſt, to beat us quite off from carnal and ſecular confidences; that being forc'd to let go our hold of all our worldly comforts, we may ſtick the cloſer to God in our dependences upon him. And that good *Hezekiah's* temper was a little too apt to be peccant in this, the next *Chapter* ſhews us, where out of * oſtentation he ſhews *Merodach-Baladan's* Meſſengers, that came to con-

1.

* 2 *Chron.* 32. 26. 'tis call'd, *The pride of his heart.*

congratulate his recovery, his *treaſury*, and *armoury*, and *ſpicery*. And then to put the higher value upon the following mercy. How ſweet would health be after ſuch a bitter ſickneſs? how ſoon are the pains and throws of Childe-birth forgotten for joy when the Man-childe is once born into the world? the greatneſs of the danger ſerving to aggrandize and heighten the deliverance. And laſtly to teach us a right eſtimate of our own graces, and of that intereſt we have in God. *Great Saints muſt look for great afflictions.* A more then ordinary ſtrength requires a more then ordinary tryal. Every Childe, every Novice in Religion can digeſt a little bitterneſs. *Hezekiah* is to be treated as a Man, to be put upon a becoming task. The Sons of *Anak*, and the *Zanzummim* are fit for ſuch a champion as *Joſhua* to incounter. Wherefore if God, who uſes not to lay more upon us, then we are able to bear, has laid his hand heavy upon thee, has increaſed thy pains, and inraged thy ſmart: bear up, brave ſoul, be of good courage in thy conflicts, be ſtrong in the Lord when he calls thee forth to ſuch hard ſervice, grudge not to lay out that ſtrength God has given thee to bear thee up and to bear thee out in the greateſt endurances. Thus Holy *Job*, when the whole world was againſt him, the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans*, the Devil and his friends, and wife and all and God him-

2.

S. *John* 16. 21.

3.

Obſ.

himself seem'd to be an indifferent looker on; bore himself up stoutly against them all; and by the power of God's Grace in him withstood the worst of Providences without him. The Saints are made glorious by their sufferings, and 'tis their great afflictions put the lustre upon their victorious Graces, when patience has had its perfect work. *Hezekiah* was a man of great piety, and must therefore meet with great bitterness. And this bitterness in the next place is the greater too, because it comes in the place of *Peace, Cujus ipsum nomen dulce est*, as the great *Orator* tells us, whose very name is luscious in the mouth, and speaks sweetness.

We say, Variety is delightful; and 'tis the condition of the sublunary world to be whirl'd about in perpetual vicissitudes, to be as mutable and full of changes, as the Moon it self, who has the Dominion over it. And I confess, that the day-break brings comfortable tidings after telling the Clocks of a tedious and restless night; the verdant Spring is welcome, that has been usher'd in by a hard Winter; and the Sun-shine shews pleasant, which follows a bitter storm: But on the contrary (which was *Hezekiah's* case here) out of a prosperous state to be tumbled into adversity, to have new troubles tread upon the heels of our peace, out of health to be thrown upon a bed of bitter sickness; this

is

is a ſad change, and muſt needs go to the heart of the ſtouteſt and wiſeſt: when the remembrance of their former good eſtate ſerves only to aggravate their preſent ills. Yet ſo it ſeems good to the all wiſe God to exerciſe his Children, to try their ſincerity to the utmoſt, whether they have any by-ends in their ſervice; whether their piety be real, or only a pretenſe; whether, when their conditions are alter'd, their reſolutions will not change too, and when a ſtorm comes, take to the hedge, and keep a dangerous perſecuted profeſſion company no longer; whether they will go along with their Religion, when it goes as Chriſt did to be crucified, or with the Diſciples deſert him and leave him to himſelf. This was Satan's argument, * *Doth Job ſerve God for nought?* and therefore ſtrips him to the very skin, and makes that very skin uneaſie too, by cloathing it all over with bliſters and ſores; that by that time *Job* had done ſcraping with his pot-ſheard, he had no skin at all left to cover him, but was * fain to get him a new covering out of the aſhes he roll'd himſelf in. Yet *Job*, when he had loſt all, would not let go his integrity, but prov'd in deſpight of the Devil's ſuggeſtions, that he *ſerv'd God for God's ſake*, and could fairly truſt him for his reward in the next world. Wherefore 'tis a brave challenge of that Heroick Apoſtle, Rom. VIII. 35. *Who*, ſayes he, *ſhall ſeparate us from the*

* *Job* 1. 9.
* So himſelf complains, *Job* 7. 5. *My fleſh is cloathed with worms, and clods of duſt, my skin is broken, and become loathſome.*

Obſ. The pious man ſerves God for God's ſake.

the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? as if he had said, Let me see that Man, or Devil, or Thing in the world, that can drive me from my just confidences, and blessed assurances of God's love. And for death, he makes nothing of it, vouchsafes it not the mention, but in a *parenthesis* in the next verse; looks upon it as a meer scare-crow, a thing he has been used to, and now fears it not; but gets him upon a place of Scripture, and defies it; *As it is written*, sayes he, *For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.* And then in the two last verses of that *Chapter*, 'tis as bravely by him resolv'd upon the question; *I am perswaded that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* So then for peace let bitterness come; nay, let great bitterness come; yet such a resolution will weather the point of the worst change.

But yet to aggravate this change, there is another consideration still behinde; that 'twas by way of surprize; it came strangely and unexpectedly, *Behold, for peace I had great bitterness.* When Scripture bids us *behold*, 'tis worth our while to stand and look about; and this word gives us this les-

son

ſon, that *A Chriſtian muſt ſtand upon his guard*; prepare for changes, and be provided *in omnem eventum*, for what ever may happen. In this poſture *Job* ſtood, which made him bear the brunt, and receive the ſhock the better. *The thing which I fear'd*, * ſayes he, *is come upon me.* But it ſhould ſeem *Hezekiah* did not make that preparation, entertain'd no ſuch jealouſies. We read in the *Chapter* before, that the Angel had diſcomfited the Aſſyrian Hoſt, and that *Sennacherib* himſelf the Monarch was aſſaſſin'd by his Sons: which quit the King of *Judah* utterly of all apprehenſions; he is wrapt up in ſecurity; yet ſee, he is no ſooner rid of this feär, but another arreſt is ſerv'd upon him: *In thoſe dayes*, ſayes the firſt verſe of this Chapter, *was Hezekiah ſick unto death.* There ſurprizes him a bile worſe then *Rabſhakeh*, ſticks cloſe to him, and ſends him once more to his prayers. So apt are good men upon little reſpite to forget themſelves. Judgement comes like a thief in the night, and ſteals upon us: it concerns us therefore to watch, and to ſet a good centry, that we may not be caught unawares. But alas! how do we generally ſleep over our great concerns, and never heed evils, till they befal us; which are with far more difficulty cured, then they might have been prevented? Nothing can be more dreadful, then when judgements give us a *camiſade*, ſet upon

Obſ.

* *Job* 3. 25.

us in the dead of our ſecurity, beat up our quarters, and catch us unprovided.

And ſtill this *affliction* has a higher ſtep, taking it in the ſpiritual ſenſe, for the diſquiet of minde, and *trouble of Conſcience*, ariſing poſſibly from the ſenſe of ſin, or from the diſtruſt of God's favour, in this his ſickneſs; to which the deliverance with its improvement hath reference. *Hezekiah's* minde as well as body was ſore; and the Bile was not ſo much, it ſhould ſeem, in his ſide, as 'twas in's very heart. He had ſtitches and pains of Conſcience; and his inner man was more afflicted, then the outward; and his ſpirit labour'd under no leſs diſtempers then his fleſh did. And this is ſure a very afflictive condition; when not only the Ciſterns of earthly comfort are filled with waters of *Marah*; but even the ſpring of conſolations from within, I mean a good conſcience, runs in troubled ſtreams of *Meribah*: when a godly man's thoughts work, and boyl, and, as the wicked man is compar'd by the * Prophet, he becomes *like the troubled Sea, which caſts up mire and dirt.* And yet thus God deals ſometime with his own; to take their peace from them, to leave them as it were in a ſtate of deſertion to themſelves; that ſo they may put a higher eſtimate upon his favour, and walk humbly and carefully in the ſenſe of it.

* *Iſa.* 57. 20.

Obſ. *A troubled conſcience, then is not alwayes an evil conſcience.*

ſcience. The beſt of Saints are ſometimes put upon theſe conflicts, to ſtruggle under the burden of their ſins, and the apprehenſion of wrath due to them: when God looſens and ſlacks their confidences, blots and obſcures their evidences, ſtaggers their aſſurances, fills them full of doubts, and perplexities, and jealouſies of their own eſtate; and ſo purſues them with legal terrors, that he drives them to fly before the face of the avenger, even unto their City of Refuge, the Merits of *Chriſt*: and likely ſickneſs is God's time of Viſiting iniquity in this manner; and then ſins come thick to remembrance. The wicked and the godly may in this reſpect little differ in their outward Symptoms, as to the trouble and quiet of Conſcience: but in the grounds of either there is a vaſt difference. The *ungodly* man, when his Conſcience is awak'd with ſome rouzing judgement, is poſſeſt with the frightful foreſights of unavoidable vengeance: the *godly* are troubled at God's diſpleaſure, at the withdrawings of his favour, and the hidings of his countenance. The *one* has no Sanctuary to betake himſelf to; his troubles immerſe him into the gulph of deſpair: the *other* when he is ſeiz'd with the arreſts of the Law, can by Faith lay hold upon the terms of Evangelical mercy, and has a powerful advocate to plead for him, and a ſufficient bail to fetch him off, even *Chriſt Jeſus*, the

Mediator of the Covenant. Nor again does their calm and tranquility of minde proceed from the ſame principle, or tend to the ſame practice; the *wicked* man's quiet proceeds from his carnal ſecurity; his conſcience is caſt into a dead ſleep, and becomes inſenſible, by a kinde of ſpiritual lethargy, that 'tis not ſo much want of trouble as want of ſenſe; wherefore he ſtill runs on ſecurely in his ſinful courſe: whereas the inward peace, which a *godly* man enjoyes, ariſes from the aſſurances of pardon, and the ſenſe of God's favour; and this puts him upon a careful walking with God, that he may not tempt him to remove his peace. And this his confidence in God, and reſolution of his own integrity bears him up even in the midſt of his dejections and diſquiets; that, when he goes mourning all the day, when he feeds himſelf with his tears, and in great anxiety and diſtreſs pouſs out his ſoul within him, he can ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* XLII. and XLIII. *Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul? and why art thou diſquieted within me? hope in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.* For he knows that however, when God has taken and purſu'd all his advantages againſt him, when he has laid load upon him, he is ſure at laſt to give him a good iſſue out of the temptation, and, be his affliction what it will,

to

to procure him in the end a merciful *Deliverance*, which is our next Theme to treat of.

And this a two-fold *Deliverance*, according to his two-fold diſtemper, *Bodily*, and *Ghoſtly*.

His *temporal* affliction, his ſickneſs, is cur'd by the temporal mercy of his recovery, that God has *deliver'd his ſoul*, i. e. his life, *from the pit of corruption*, from the Grave: and his *ſpiritual* malady or trouble of conſcience by that ſpiritual mercy, the pardon of his ſins, that God had *caſt all his ſins behinde his back*.

Firſt, Here's the removal of his ſickneſs, and the return of *health*; and then, to improve that, here's the removal of his ſins, and the reſtitution of his *peace*.

Behold, for peace I had great bitterneſs.

But thou haſt in love to my ſoul deliver'd it from the pit of corruption.

For thou haſt caſt all my ſins behinde thy back.

Thou. 'twas Thou deliveredſt me. He imputes his Recovery here wholly to God. Hence we learn, that *God is the ſole Author of all our deliverances*. His ſickneſs might have come by ſome caſualty, might proceed from natural cauſes in the general way of a permiſſive providence: but to be ſure, God had a ſpecial hand in the reſtauration. That was the effect, and a peculiar diſpoſition of a particular *Obſ.*

pro-

providence, and came with a *Mandamus* from heaven. I will not deny, but means may, and muſt be, and were here uſed; but then 'tis God's bleſſing that puts vertue into thoſe means, and gives them an effectual operation. Practicioners of Phyſick will tell us, that a *lump of Figs* bruiſed and made up into a Plaiſter may be no unfit *Cataplaſm* to be applied toa plague ſore, to help to ripen and break the Bile? yet here in this caſe 'twas God himſelf by his Prophet gave the *Receipt*, and in all caſes virtuates and ſucceeds the means. Wherefore the *Syriack* Interpreter tranſpoſes the two laſt Verſes of this Chapter, ſetting the 22. verſe before the 21. and that very appoſitely to the cloſe of the *Song* in the 20th. *verſe*, where he ſayes he will *Sing Songs to the tuned inſtruments all the dayes of his life in the houſe of the Lord. Now*, as the *Syriack* brings it in, *Hezekiah had ſaid, What is the ſign, that I ſhall go to the houſe of the Lord?* That I ſhall go abroad again, and wait upon God in his Temple. *And Iſaias gave this anſwer*, ſayes he, *Let them take a lump of Figs, and ſpread it upon the Bile.* (Which verſes in the common order they ſtand in, ſeem to be a ὕστερον πρότερον, out of their due place.) So that the *Lump of Figs* ſhould according to this Interpreter, be appointed here by God for a ſign as well as a Plaiſter, nor only for a *medicinal* expedient, but alſo for a *Symbolical* token. Thus it is in

all

all our troubles and afflictions, that befall us, be it what it will, or who it will, the malice of man or the Devil, Chance or Nature, our own negligence or indiſcretion, that leads us on; 'tis God that brings us off; and as we pray, that he will not *Lead us into temptation*, (which he does but very rarely, and that only by way of permiſſion) ſo we muſt pray to him alone to *deliver us from all evil.* And yet this is not intended to leſſen our gratitude to too men, whoſe skill or care has afforded us any help in our diſtreſs, as being inſtruments under God for our good. And ſo the *Prophet* here no queſtion was concern'd in the good *King*'s acknowledgements, and the very *Recipe* of Figs is fil'd up in the Records of Scripture.

Further, beſides the ſubordination, that men act as inſtruments, in what they do for us; God is the ſole principal Agent: there is uſually this difference too; that men, what kindeneſs or good office they may do us, they may do it for their own ſake as well as ours; not out of love to our perſon ſo much, as for ſome by-reſpect and ſelf-end. The Phyſician proportions his attendance to his fee; and ſcarce any the beſt friend we have will do ought for us for God-a-mercy. Some perhaps may by the ſenſe of former obligations; but moſt by the expectation of a future reward are excited and mov'd to ſerve us. But all God's mercies proceed

ceed from pure love; *out of love thou hast deliver'd me.* I say, *Divine mercy is gratuitous*; it flows as free, as the light from the Sun, as the ſtream from the Spring. For alas! if we look into our ſelves, and conſider how vile we are by nature, how more vile by ſin; what can we finde in our ſelves, that may any way deſerve the kinde reſpects, and affectionate regards of an infinite and glorious Majeſty? what, that may be lookt upon, as a fit object of Divine Love? Have not we juſt reaſon, the very beſt of us, with the *Pſalmiſt*, to hold up our hands in admiration, and bleſs our ſelves, ſaying, * *What is man that thou art mindeful of him*, or takeſt any knowledge of him? *or the ſon of man, that thou viſiteſt him*, that thou makeſt any account of him? He doth not want us, nor is our goodneſs any thing to him: neither can our welfare adde ought to his infinite glories, nor our miſcarriage ſubſtract ought from them. It is our duty and our happineſs to boot, to ſerve him; nor is he a whit obliged to us: when we have done all we ought to do, we are to him ſtill *unprofitable Servants.* If we are good, we are good to our ſelves; and if we are otherwiſe, we ſhall have the worſt on't. And yet to ſee, how all his thoughts and cares run upon us, how he has made man the darling of heaven, and the charge of Angels; what bleſſings he daily diſpenſes among us, and what unconceivable

Obſ.

* *Pſal.* 8. 4.

ceivable good things he has prepar'd for us, if we will but fit our ſelves for them; how his providence waits upon us at our up-riſing, and our down-lying, and in all our wayes conſtantly attends us, and takes that particular care of us, that he has the very hairs of his head *in numerato*; will abundantly convince us of his undeſerved love to us, and of that love we owe to him again. O may thoſe paſſionate concernments, he has for us, move us at leaſt to be concern'd for our ſelves! The Apoſtle to juſtifie this *Allegorical* expoſition of that Text in the old Law, * *Thou ſhalt not muzzle the ox, which treadeth out the corn*; out of which he argues the maintenance of Goſpel-Miniſters; ſeems to ask a ſtrange queſtion, to ſhew that thoſe words could not well be taken literally, *Doth God*, * ſayes he, *take care of Oxen*? Why, learned Apoſtle, does not God take care of Oxen? I ſure, and of all his other creatures too: His meaning is, that God's thoughts and deſigns are ſo much buſied and taken up about man, that He ſeems to be the only object of his care; inſomuch that this very Law of mercy towards the labouring Beaſt, (witneſs (to go no further) the very * fourth Commandment, where the poor Aſs as well as the Ox, comes in for his ſhare in the priviledge of Sabbath-reſt) was by the Apoſtle's argument primarily and ultimately intended for the temporal

* *Deut.* 25. 4.

* 1 *Cor.* 9. 9.

* *Deut.* 5 14.

ſupport and incouragement of ſuch men, as are ſet aſide for ſpiritual miniſtrations, to labour in the word. *Oves & boves & pecora campi*, * Sheep and Oxen and all Beaſts of the Field he has ſo abſolutely put under man's feet, as if he took no further care of them, then as they may be for his uſe and ſervice. If God ſo freely love us, how ought we to love one another, and to help one another with all kinde of courteſie and aſſiſtance? but above all, in a due imitation of Divine Charity, not to let it be a carnal affection, or expreſs it only in ſervice to the outward man; but to improve it ſpiritually, that it may be a love from the ſoul, and a love to the ſoul of one another.

* *Pſal.* 8. 7.

Obſ. *In love to my ſoul.* This, *Soul-love is the beſt of loves.* This is to oblige a man into the other world with an immortal benefit, to do his ſoul any good, to ſerve him any way in that. 'Tis the Chriſtian complement, which the great preacher of love St. *John* uſes in his Epiſtle to his friend *Gaius*; * *Beloved, I wiſh above things, that thou mayeſt proſper and be in health, even as thy ſoul proſpereth.* Let worldlings think what they will; our health and proſperity is, as our ſoul proſpers and does well: All our worldly enjoyments, unleſs we have the art to ſpiritualize them, and can by grace make them ſerviceable to our ſouls, are but dry chips, and can afford no true real comfort. The very

* *3 John v. 2.*

very *Breaſts* of providence, from whence our peace, plenty, liberty, and all outward bleſſings flow, without this are but *Winde-bags*, and thoſe that draw them moſt, will finde they get nothing but vanity and emptineſs, fill themſelves with vexation, and diſtemper; if God by his Grace do not ſanctifie his providences to the good of their ſouls. This is that, which makes bleſſings to be bleſſings indeed. And indeed God does deſign all his temporal mercies to our ſpiritual advantage, if we would but comply with his deſigns. And thus it was here with *Hezekiah*, whoſe ſoul was repriev'd from the Grave at once, and preſerv'd from Hell; for *the pit of corruption* in Scripture-ſtyle ſignifies both; from the Grave by his recovery, and from Hell by his pardon.

To take the words in either of thoſe ſenſes, or in both; what a mercy of God is it to us all, to every one of us, that are here this day, that we are yet on this ſide Hell, yet on this ſide the Grave? and what care are we oblig'd to in our walking, when we conſider that *All our life-time we walk upon the pit-brink?* *Obſ.* We ſay, that thoſe that are at Sea, are but ſo many inches remov'd from death; but the * *Pſalmiſt* tells us, that upon Land too, or whereever we are at the furtheſt diſtance, there is but the breadth of a ſpan betwixt it and us. Now what a madneſs were it for any one to dance and frolick about the

* *Pſ.* 39. 5.

mouth of ſuch a dangerous pit, where 'tis ſo eaſie falling in, and impoſſible to get out again? And yet, O deſperate folly! moſt people of the world are thus mad, purſuing the ſeeming ſweets of a momentany life to the hazard of an eternal ruine, and the irreparable loſs of their immortal ſouls. I have heard a ſtory, and I ſuppoſe many of you have heard it too, of a man, that travelling late, and being in drink, rode over a narrow foot-Bridge, where there was a great deep water underneath, that the leaſt trip of the Horſes foot would have poſted the rider to his long home: next morning, when he was come to himſelf, being askt which way he came, and brought to the place, the apprehenſion of his laſt nights adventure did ſo ſurprize and aſtoniſh his ſober thoughts, that he fell down dead in the very place at the ſight on't. And when we look back upon the follies and vanities of our paſt lives, how can we but be juſtly ſtartled, when almoſt every ſtep we have trod, has been upon the pit's brink of deſtruction? Thoſe eſpecially, whoſe deſires ſeem to be as bottomleſs as this pit is, who cry, *Give, give,* and never think they have enough, and are immoderate in heaping up this world's goods; may look upon this pit as a ſtop in their career: when they ſit down and conſider, that within a ſcore or two of years hence, very likely in leſs time, all their

toil

toil and gain will come to no account: Go they muſt one time or other, and pack up they know not how ſoon, and yet carry nothing along with them of all that they have. Beauty, ſtrength, riches, honour, profits, pleaſures, will all be loſt and ſpoil'd, and prove at laſt but care and refuſe in this pit of corruption: this * שחתבלי, the Ward-robe of our old caſt cloaths, and the ſtore-hole of our worm-eaten Lumber. We are all journeying ſtraight onward to the Grave, and ſooner or later, every one in his appointed time, muſt arrive there: but happy, thrice happy thoſe, who when they are laid down to reſt in the Grave, are deliver'd from Hell, that other pit of corruption. And this *Hezekiah* was aſſur'd of, that God had deliver'd his ſoul from this pit; becauſe his ſins were forgiven.

* בלי *d ſ*
mam פרי
בלה *unde*
בלוי *ap. J*
38. 11, 1
veterament
Ang. old c
clouts and
rotten rag

And this is our third ſtage, the *Aſſurance* of God's love to him, and the *Improvement* of this bodily mercy: *for thou haſt caſt all my ſins behinde thy back.*

From whence we may make ſeveral *Obſervs*; as firſt, that *God uſes to accumulate mercy*; to deal with us, as he commands us to deal with one another, to give us * *good meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running over into our boſom.* Here upon *Hezekiah's* prayer, God gives more then *Obſ.*

* S. *Luke* 6. 38.

then is ask'd; lengthens his life, ſecures him and his Kingdom from the *Aſſyrians*, recovers him from his ſickneſs, and pardons his ſins. Thus mercies grow like cluſters in the vineyards of *Engaddi*, A great incouragement for prayer, which makes ſuch ample returns. The beſt Husbandry we can uſe, to improve our ſelves, by praying often. A great comfort this too, to any good man upon the bed of ſickneſs; that God will both recover and pardon him, both reſtore him to health and accept him to favour. Thus our *Saviour* in thoſe Miracles of Mercy he ſhew'd upon the bodies of men, was wont to regard their ſouls too, and wrought cures both upon the outward and inward man: as he did to the *Paralytick*, ſaying firſt, * *Thy ſins are forgiven thee*; then, *Riſe, take up thy bed, and walk*. Thus eaſing him firſt of the heavy load of his ſins, and then inabling him to bear the lighter burthen of his couch.

S. *Mark* 2. 9.

Obſ. 2. *Pardon of ſins is the complement and perfection of mercy*. His recovery without this would have done him little good, and the renewing of his Leaſe have ſerv'd only for an opportunity of running farther on the ſcore, and ſo of making his condition much worſe then it had been. O infinitely happy that man, even in this life, whoſe ſins are forgiven him! all his enjoyments muſt needs have a pleaſant reliſh; whereas to the wicked

this

this *Coloquintida*, the rank *Hogo*, which unpardon'd ſin gives them, ſpoils all their comforts, and makes their condition, be it never ſo ſpangled and glorious, never ſo gay and jaunty to the outward ſhew, troubleſome and vexatious within; like the Emperour's *Ermin-Cap*, richly lin'd with pricking cares, and cutting fears: of which our good King had now clear'd both his Head and Crown; for he had God's promiſe, that neither the *Aſſyrian* ſhould aſſault his Kingdom, nor *Satan* his ſoul.

3. *He, whoſe ſins are forgiven, needs not fear hell or the grave.* *Hezekiah* here is aſſured, that God had deliver'd his ſoul from the pit of corruption, becauſe he had caſt all his ſins behinde his back. *The righteous man*, ſay the * *Proverbs*, i. e. he that is juſtified by faith, and has his ſins pardon'd, *is as bold as a Lion*, fearleſs, and undaunted: for indeed, what need ſuch an one fear? Let the Devil go about *like a roaring Lion*; he has *the Lion of the tribe of Judah* to defend him: and for death, now the ſting is pluck'd out, he plays with it as a harmleſs Snake; and to take off even the natural apprehenſions of it, makes it familiar to him by his daily meditation. *Obſ.* *Prov. 28.

Laſtly, *God's pardons are univerſal and abſolute.* They are all his ſins; and all caſt behinde God's back, never more to be remembred. God pardons totally *Obſ.*

totally and finally, not by halves or half way, but wholly and out-right; he forgives and forgets. We are too too apt to throw our ſins behinde our own back, and to take no notice of them; our great concern is to get them caſt behinde God's back. O let us prize this pardoning Grace of God's; endeavour to obtain it by confeſſing and forſaking our ſins; and eſpecially in the time of ſickneſs, or any other affliction, when God's hand lies upon us, to make our humble and earneſt ſupplications then to the bleſſed Spirit, to bring home to our ſoul this comfort; to renew our repentance, and to re-inforce our reſolutions; and having obtain'd forgiveneſs, never by any freſh wilful acts of ſin to forfeit the comfort of ſuch an aſſurance.

Thus have we ſeen *Hezekiah* Afflicted, Recover'd, Pardon'd: we are now in the laſt place come to his *Thanksgiving*, and *Acknowledgement*, and that, as I noted before, ſet down.

1. *Negatively*, that, if he had miſcarried in this his ſickneſs, then he could not poſſibly have perform'd this duty of praiſe.

2. *Poſitively*, that being now recover'd, and in a ſtate of life and health, he will make it his buſineſs, as he ſayes in the 20. *verſe*, *All the dayes of his life to ſing his ſongs in the houſe of the Lord.*

For

For the Grave cannot praiſe thee, &c. which words will help us to ſeveral uſeful obſervations.

In the firſt place, that *The only Return which God expects for his mercies is Praiſe.* This is given here as the reaſon of this his deliverance; *FOR the Grave cannot praiſe thee; the living ſhall.* God the *Jehovah* being an Infinite Being, and conſequently, in his Eſſence and Actions, independent of any other being, can have no Principle or End of his Actions without him. As in a Circle, the whole round being in it ſelf compleat, the beginning and end meet but in an imaginary point, and admit not of a real diſtinction. And ſuch a Circle is God, which comprehends all things, and is it ſelf not comprehended. Wherefore he can have no other principle, but himſelf; no other end, but himſelf, in all that he does or deſigns. He is the *Alpha* and *Omega*; * *From him and to him are all things.* He acts all freely from his own will, and wiſely to his own glory: and in this manner we his creatures are to act, if we will act regularly, from him and to him. He is, as the ſupreme cauſe which excites and impowers all ſubordinate agents to act; ſo the Chiefeſt Good too, in which all their actions ſhould terminate. And in this ſubordination all other creatures, in their ſeveral ſpheres of activity, comply with the rule and method of their Creator: man only to his ſhame ſtands out, who *Obſ.*

* *Rom.* 11. 36.

has moſt reaſon to be, and to act like his God, wearing his Image. Good and pious men however do endeavour after this, which is their perfection; to live by the power to the praiſe of God, that is, to act by his Grace to his Glory. Should God require any greater matter of us, as * *Naaman's* ſervants tell him, when we lie on the bed of ſickneſs, when we are incompaſs'd with diſtreſſes, would not we have done it? and when for our deliverance all, that he looks for at our hands, is praiſe only; he muſt be of an extraordinary diſingenuous impiety, that ſhould refuſe to teſtifie his thanks in ſo cheap a Sacrifice. This civility we deny not to men; 'tis a Phyſician's reputation, when his patient recovers; and we uſually, beſides his Salary, allow him our good word. Let not us grudge God the honour of a poor acknowledgement.

* 2 *Kings* 5. 13.

Again, *praiſing* and *celebrating God*, and *hoping for his truth*, (*his mercy*, ſay the *LXX*; *his Salvation*, the Chaldee Paraphraſt) are here made *Synonyma's*, to mean the ſame thing. If ſo, then a generous truſt in God's mercy is the right celebration of it. *To truſt in God is to praiſe him.* I have been afflicted; God has deliver'd me; I praiſe him for it: how? by truſting that he will ſtill deliver me. I have been exerciſed with grievous ſickneſs; God has viſited me with his loving kindeneſs: I come to return

Obſ.

return him due praiſe for his goodneſs: how? by entertaining and profeſſing a juſt confidence in God, that he will never fail me, never leave me deſtitute. And this, as 'tis a comfortable, ſo 'tis a rational and a natural duty. We ordinarily do it to men: when we have had tryals of their fidelity in matters of any moment, we ſtick not to truſt them farther, and by ſo doing recommend their honeſt juſt dealing to the world. Shall we not much more do ſo to God? whoſe mercy and faithfulneſs we have ſo often experimented, when no one could help us out but He He that diſtruſts God, ſcandalizes his goodneſs, and calls his truth in queſtion. *David* is not aſham'd to make one of the firſt and earlieſt acts of God's common providence towards him, when he was an infant, an argument of his truſting God his whole life after. * *Thou art he, that tookeſt me out of my Mothers Bowels.* What then? *my praiſe ſhall be alwayes of thee.* A little after upon the ſtrength of this confidence, he prayes, * *Caſt me not off in the time of old age; forſake me not, when my ſtrength faileth.* * *Pſal.* 71. 6. * *Ver.* 9.

Further, in that the Grave cannot praiſe God, nor they that go down into the pit hope for his truth; it appears, that *Death is a ſilent and a hopeleſs ſtate.* The Grave indeed opens a wide mouth; but 'tis to ſwallow the man, not to praiſe God with. And how can Divine Praiſes be celebrated *Obſ.*

by death, which puts all the Organs and Instruments of Speech out of tune? when, as the *Preacher* * phrases it, *all the daughters of musick are brought low*: and then for those that go down into the pit, they together with their lives quit their hopes, and are lodg'd now in a remediless condition. No hope to be met with at the bottom of that pit, because the pit it self is bottomless: for so the *Septuagint* have it, οἱ ἐν ᾅδῃ, *Those that are in hell*; they that are in *Gehenna*, says the *Arabick*; and by the *Targum* the pit is interpreted * *the lake of perdition*. Hope is a vertue peculiar to life; and when the man dies, hope fetches its last gasp, and dyes with him. After death there's no recovery. Faith and repentance can now no longer exercise any vital acts. If thou dye in thy sins, thou will lie and rot in thy sins, and rise again in thy sins. No imbalming can preserve thy soul, or take from thee the stench of thy sins, in that pit of corruption. Death concludes thee to an unalterable condition. Here thou mayest manage thy resolutions, and shape thy course, to please thy self; and, if thou wilt, to please thy God, if thou wilt let his grace pilot thy vessel: but when thou art once put into harbour, the ship then is laid up, and there's no mending the miscarriages of thy past voyage. Be sure then to live godly, if thou wouldst dye comfortably; and then thy grave will prove a bed of spices, and thy dust

Eccl. 12. 4.

נוב בית אבדן

duſt be preſerv'd, as the *Phœnix* aſhes in hopes of a joyful reſurrection.

To draw to a concluſion, a 4th. Note may be this, that *Life it ſelf is a bleſſing to be ſpent in the giver's praiſe.* From theſe words, *The living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee.* The word is twice repeated, to ſhew we ſhould do it with chearfulneſs, *with a life*; and with conſtancy, *through our whole life* If we had a hundred lives, they would be all well ſpent in God's ſervice. It will be the buſineſs and imploy of our eternity to praiſe him; and we muſt aforehand acquaint our ſelves with it, and ſo practice this leſſon here, that we may be found worthy to wait upon the *Lamb*, and ſing *Hallelujahs* in heaven. But then if we would praiſe God *to the life*, we muſt live to his praiſe, by doing things praiſe-worthy. Further, conſider what this *life* of ours is; 'tis but a breath We muſt begin this task then out of hand, preſently. There's nothing of our life ours, but the preſent, the *Nunc inſtans*, this very inſtant of time. For all, that's paſt of our lives, was indeed ours once, but now is not; nor can we recal what's gone for improvement or amendment: and what is to come, is not ours yet, and we know not whether it will be in our power, or no; and therefore the great duty & intereſt of life is the right husbanding of our preſent time. Upon this moment hangs our eternity; and *Obſ.*

this

this infinite advantage our ſhort-liv'd ſervice has, that he, that lives to God's glory here, ſhall hereafter be made partaker of it.

Thus have I as well as I could gather'd a poſie of *Obſervations*, as they grew in this fragrant piece of Scripture: and if ſome *Rue* and *Wormwood* be found amongſt the ſweeter herbs, their wholeſomeneſs will make amends for their bitterneſs. *Myrrh* and *Aloes*, as they are bitter drugs, ſo they are rich perfumes; in either notion, great preſervatives they are againſt corruption. The Pſalmiſt tells us, *Pſal. XLV.* that * *All the Churches garments ſmell of them*, 'Tis not amiſs, if we have pounded and mix'd ſomewhat of them with the *Frankincenſe* of this days *Thanksgiving*. Which brings us to the cloſe of all, the *Exemplification*; *as I do this day.*

Vr. 8.

And that will yield us a conſiderable remark, to make an end with; that *ſignal mercies require ſolemn thanksgiving*. So *Hezekiah* is eager to *go up to the houſe of the Lord*, and cloſes this *Ode* of his with a reſolution there *to ſing his ſongs all the days of his life.* And this on purpoſe to draw in others by his example to partake in the duty. Thus *David* after ſuch a deliverance, *Pſal.* XXXIV. invites others; *O magnifie the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together*, In the 6th. *verſe* as it were pointing to himſelf, *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and ſaved him out of all his troubles.* Let

Obſ.

Let us then ſhut up all with *a Form of Praiſe*, wherein we may all joyn, and every one of us bear a part: and I am ſure there is not any one of this whole Congregation, that will not be particularly and perſonally concern'd.

WE praiſe thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord. All the world doth worſhip thee, the Father Everlaſting. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.

Thou doſt whatſoever thou pleaſeſt, both in heaven and in earth: and yet doſt by thy Providence order all events, as to thy own glory, ſo to the good and advantage of the children of men. Thou madeſt all things for the uſe of man, and man himſelf for thine own ſervice.

We bleſs thee for thy works of Creation. O Lord, how manifold are thy works? in great wiſdom and out of great goodneſs haſt thou made them all. The heavens declare thy glory, and the earth is full of thy goodneſs.

We ſtand obliged, as we are thy creatures and the work of thy hands, to do thee homage, and to pay thee the tribute of Praiſe; together with all thy works, which bleſs thee in all places of thy dominion.

Eſpecially man is bound to praiſe thee for the dignity of his creation, being made little lower then the Angels. Thou haſt crown'd him with honour and majeſty, and haſt put all things under his feet.

We bleſs thee, that thou haſt made us Men and Women, after thine own image, in thy likeneſs; and haſt breath'd into us the breath of life. We will ſing unto thee therefore, as long as we live; we will ſing praiſes unto our God, while we have a being.

That thou haſt given us an immortal ſoul, capable of eternal felicity, and of a bleſſed communion with thy ſelf: faculties of reaſon, to contemplate the glories of our Maker; and of ſpeech, to expreſs and ſet forth thy praiſes.

All our members were writ down in thy book, when as yet there was none of them: thou art our God, even from our Mothers

thers womb: when we yet hung at the breaſt, thou tookeſt care of us: we have lived at thy charge, and been maintain'd by thy providence, ever ſince we were born. Oh, let us praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.

Thou haſt all along ſent forth thy ſun, and powr'd down thy rain, to provide us our food in due ſeaſon; and all thy ſteps towards us have dropt fatneſs. Thou haſt ſatisfied our mouth with good things, and haſt ſurrounded us with loving kindneſs and tender mercies.

Nor have thy preſervations over us been leſs, or leſs conſtant, then thy proviſions for us. Thou ſecureſt us from the caſualties of the day, and from the terrors of the night.

Thou art at our upriſing and our downlying; who keepeſt us both ſleeping and waking, and yet thy ſelf neither ſlumbreſt nor ſleepeſt. Thou underſtandeſt and guardeſt all our way. Day by day we magnifie thee for theſe thy daily favours.

We bleſs thee for preſerving us from the perils of our infancy, and from the miſcariages of our riper years.

Then, when we were not able to help our ſelves, thou tookeſt us up, ſetſt thy Angel-guardians about us, who continually behold thy face; and didſt graciouſly preſerve us from thoſe inconveniencies, which either the negligence of thoſe about us, or our own infirmity, or the condition of humane nature, might have expos'd us to.

Since, when we were grown up to diſcretion, and were apt enough by our intemperances & indiſcretions to do our ſelves miſchief; 'twas thou alone haſt kept us from the injuries of weather, from the rage of mercileſs elements, from all ill chances and ſad accidents, from the power of Devils, and from the malice of men, and from the calamities of ill times; and haſt often delivered us from the dangers and ill conſequents of our own folly, even when by preſumptuous ſins we have put our ſelves out of thy protection.

O the unſpeakable mercies of a good God, which either we have

have forgot, or were never ſenſible of? what is man, that thou art ſo mindful of him? or the ſon of man that thou ſhouldſt ſo regard us? who ſcarce ever mind or regard thee, and thoſe infinite obligations thou haſt from time to time laid upon us.

We thank thee for thoſe early advantages of our Chriſtian education, that we were born within the pale of the Church, under the ſound of the Goſpel, and not amidſt Turks and Heathen people, which know not thy name; and were betimes by holy Baptiſm ingrafted into Chriſt's myſtical body.

O inеſtimable benefit, and that which can never ſufficiently be valued! though ſuch is our unthankful carriage for this peculiar favour, which thou haſt denyed to millions of men, that deſerve it better then we do; that we loath thy word, ſlight thy Ordinances, and ſcoff at thy Miniſters; and in effect, through our peeviſh ingratitude, ſhew our ſelves as arrant Turks and Infidels, as any of the Turks and Infidels themſelves are.

Further, we bleſs thee for the love of Friends, and the care of Tutors, which put us upon good courſes; for the vigour of parts, and the integrity of limbs and ſenſes; for our health and ſtrength; for our peace and plenty; for bleſſings, both publick and private, perſonal and national, temporal and ſpiritual.

For giving us further time and ſpace of repentance; that thou haſt not cut us off in the ſtrength of our years, and the height of our luſts; that we are yet on this ſide hell and the grave, yet in a poſſibility of Salvation, and are yet alive to praiſe thee, as we do this day, and to ſpeak well of thy name.

We bleſs thee for all thoſe opportunities and advantages, thou haſt ſo liberally afforded us, of ſerving thee, and of ſaving our own ſouls; that, if we miſcarry either in this world or the next, 'tis not thou by thy grace or thy providence haſt been wanting to us, but we have been wanting both to thee and to our ſelves.

Finally, we return thee our hearty thanks, and praiſe thy name, for all thoſe afflictions, thou haſt at any time laid upon us, and for thy merciful deliverances out of them.

That, when thou haſt viſited our iniquities, and

chaſtn'd us for ſin, thou haſt not dealt with us after our ſins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities, but haſt remembred mercy in the midſt of judgment, and haſt pitied us like as a father pitieth his children; (for thou knoweſt our frame, thou remembreſt that we are but duſt.)

That thou haſt laid no more upon us at any time, then we were inabled by thee well to bear, and by thy grace haſt ſupported us in our ſufferings; and that, when thou haſt ſeen fit to put any bitterneſs into our cup, thou haſt deſign'd it for our ſoul's health, and to a ſpiritual advantage; and laſtly, that together with the temptation thou haſt given a gracious and happy iſſue out of it.

And here we humbly intreat thee, O Father of mercies, to accept the thankſgiving of every particular perſon in this Congregation, for all thy favours and merciful deliverances vouchſafed them through the courſe of their whole lives; and more eſpecially be graciouſly pleaſed to accept the thanks of that thy ſervant, who being by thy gracious providence recover'd of a grievous and dangerous ſickneſs, this day in thy houſe preſents his offering of praiſe.

Grant, that both he and all of us may have that his ſickneſs and all our afflictions ſo ſanctified, and this his recovery and all our deliverances ſo improv'd to him and to us, that we may all be fully aſſur'd, that out of love to our ſouls thou haſt deliver'd them from the pit of corruption, and that thou haſt caſt all our ſins behind thy back.

Thus ſhall our meditation of thee be ſweet; we will be glad in the Lord, and rejoyce in thy ſalvation, who forgiveſt all our iniquities, and healeſt all our diſeaſes, and redeemeſt our life from deſtruction.

Who hideſt not thy face from us in the day of trouble, but regardeſt the prayer of the deſtitute: who lookeſt down from the height of thy ſanctuary, to hear the groaning of thoſe that are confin'd, and to deliver them that are appointed unto death.

To declare the name of the Lord in his temple, and his praiſe

in

in the great assembly, when the people are gather'd together to serve the Lord.

Let us give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: Let us bring our offerings, and come into his courts: Let us sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoycing.

The Lord hath chasten'd us sore, but he hath not given us over unto death. We shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. Thou art our God, and we will praise thee: thou art our God, and we will exalt thee. Let us give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

The voice of rejoycing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him; in those that hope in his mercy. O Lord, our hope is in thee; Let us never be confounded. Amen.

Glory be to thee, O God.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAge 4. *line* 4. *read* understand. *p.*9 *l.*24 *r.*our carnal. *p.*17. *l.* 19. *r.* a little. *p.*18. *l.* 9 *r.* sore. *p* 21. *l.*27. *for* disposition, *r.* dispensation. *p.*25. *l.*6. *r.* of our head. *l.*11. *f.* this *r.* his. *l.* 19. *before* His meaning *put in line* 24, 25, 26, 27. (witness—— Sabbath-rest) *p.*26. *l.*21. *r.* all things. *p.* 29. *l.*6. *for* care, *r.* tare.